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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 COLOMBO 001565

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR D, SA, SA/INS, S/CT, EAP/J, EUR/NB
NSC FOR E. MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09-09-13

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [CE](#) [JA](#) [NO](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: Latest plans for Tokyo conference follow-up
meeting on September 12

Refs: (A) Colombo 1546, and previous

- (B) Colombo-SA/INS 09/03/03 fax

(U) Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead.
Reasons 1.5 (b, d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador Lunstead recently participated in planning sessions for the Tokyo follow-up meeting to be held in Colombo on September 12. The format and agenda of the upcoming meeting were discussed, as were the modalities and the substance of "press guidelines" that would be used by Special Envoy Akashi pending Tokyo's agreement. Meeting plans now seem concentrated on avoiding any controversial or new issues. END SUMMARY.

Planning for September 12 Meeting

2. (C) The Ambassador recently participated in two planning sessions for the follow-up meeting to the June Tokyo conference to be held in Colombo on September 12. The first session, which involved representatives of donor countries, was held on September 5. The second session, which involved representatives of the four co-chairs (the U.S. Japan, Norway, and the EU), was held on September 7. Japanese Ambassador Seiichiro Otsuka hosted both of the meetings. The following review is a composite sketch of where planning for the meeting now stands.

Format/Agenda of the Meeting

3. (C) Otsuka shared Tokyo's suggestions for the September 12 meeting, under which visiting Japanese Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi would kick off the meeting by making opening remarks. Donors and others participating in the meeting would then make comments per the following three agenda items:

- i) Progress of the peace process since the Tokyo conference. Featured speakers for this item would be the Norwegian facilitators and Sri Lankan government representatives. (Note: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, "LTTE," had been invited to attend the September 12 meeting, but Otsuka confirmed that the group has turned down the invitation.)
- ii) Review of implementation of assistance by the donor community, as well as inter-linkage between the peace process and assistance by the donor community.
- iii) Follow-up mechanisms for the Tokyo conference.

These agenda items basically contain the same points, in slightly different form, to those drafted by the GoJ and sent to SA/INS in Ref B.

Elements of a Press Statement

4. (C) At the second planning session on September 7, the co-chairs turned to the issue of the modalities and substance of "press guidelines" announcing the results of the September 12 meeting. Ambassador Otsuka noted that he had checked and Tokyo had confirmed that it was fine for Special Envoy Akashi to speak to the press immediately after the September 12 meeting. (Note: Per Ref A, the GoJ had originally wanted Akashi to discuss the outcome of the September 12 meeting only when he had held his press conference on September 14 after meeting with Tiger officials. We and the other donors, however, felt that the press event should come right after the September 12 event. FYI: Otsuka noted that the Tigers have not yet confirmed they will in fact meet with Akashi.) It was agreed that Akashi would not field any questions from the press after announcing the

guidelines. Per the advice of the other co-chairs, Otsuka also agreed to ask Tokyo whether the press guidelines could be issued in written form.

15. (C) In terms of the substance of the press guidelines, Otsuka agreed to discuss possible elements with the co-chairs, although Tokyo had wanted Akashi to announce the guidelines on his own (i.e., substance not agreed to in advance by the co-chairs or other donors). After some review, the co-chairs came up with the following four elements, which Otsuka said he would review with Tokyo:

- i) The statement would reaffirm the Tokyo Declaration and urge resumption of the peace talks.
- ii) It would also reaffirm Para 18 of the Tokyo Declaration regarding the linkage of assistance and the status of the peace process.
- iii) It would mention that meeting participants had reviewed the status of the peace process since the June Tokyo conference, and would urge the parties to respect the terms of the February 2002 ceasefire accord, including by accepting Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) rulings.
- iv) It would also note that participants had agreed to the following "follow-up mechanisms": a Consultative Group (CG) meeting would take place "around" June 2004 in Colombo coupled with a "monitoring and review" meeting, and a possible mid-term review meeting would take place in the January/February 2004 timeframe.

Mission Remarks re Elements

16. (C) The Ambassador met with members of the Country Team to review the proposed elements on September 8. When examining the elements, some in the Country Team were worried that the fourth element, as now drafted, might give dates that were too definite for the CG and the other meetings, especially if the peace process continued to face problems. After some discussion, Mission came to the conclusion that it might be better to talk of a CG meeting "not earlier than June 2004." Holding a CG meeting presumes that there is significant assistance underway which in turn presumes that there is progress on the peace front. By phrasing it as "no earlier than," donors would have the option of holding it later if progress is slow. The Ambassador also spoke to British High Commissioner Stephen Evans on September 8, who was basically fine with the four elements, save to make the point that the fourth element could usefully state that "meetings will also be held at different times and at different levels."

COMMENT

17. (C) Otsuka told the Ambassador that the press guidelines (and by implication, the meeting) needed to be substantive but innocuous enough not to elicit a strongly negative reaction before Akashi's planned visit on Sunday to the Vanni. So far it is shaping up that way, as the proposed guidelines are basically a re-affirmation of Tokyo (and Oslo). At any rate, there's no possibility that the twenty-plus participants could settle in a three-hour meeting any of the outstanding controversial issues, such as what the close linkage between assistance and the peace process (para 18 of the Tokyo Declaration) really means. Otsuka also noted to us that Special Envoy Akashi plans to call Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Helgesen on September 9. We think this is a positive gesture, indicating that the GoJ wants to clear the air with the Norwegians about any entangling of roles before Helgesen starts his visit to Sri Lanka early next week. END COMMENT.

18. (U) Minimize considered.

LUNSTEAD